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F. A. MACDOUGALL
DEPUTY MINISTER



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Meet the

Wildlife

of

ONTARIO'S OUTDOORS

The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests wants you to meet the fascinating friends of the naturalist, the native wildlife of Ontario whom you may see again in any field or woods you walk through, in any thicket or marshy spot you pause beside, or on any lake or stream that marks your stopping place.

Large or tiny, timid or inquisitive, they continue to lure the observing mind with the intriguing variety of their ways of life. To know them is to realize that their importance far exceeds the mundane standards of immediate utility. They share the world we live in and, by their very presence, they help to shape our future. We must, therefore, be mindful of their future, too.

For the present, their case rests easily on their natural grace and beauty and their

never-ending interest. This book follows logically from the many requests for information received from the many new visitors to Provincial Parks. The following notes, by an eminent authority, may be taken as reliable; but the proof is in the reader's hands. Visit Nature's domiciles and see for yourself.

**THERE'S AN
INTERESTING NEW WORLD
FOR YOU
IN ONTARIO'S WOODLANDS**



Prepared by
ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND FORESTS
Conservation Information Section of Operations Branch

PRICE 35 CENTS



White-tailed or Red Deer This graceful animal is one of the largest likely to be seen in the Ontario woods. True, the moose and bear are larger, but natural timidity of these animals rarely permits us anything but a fleeting glance. The deer, however, may stop to gaze at the passing motorist, or may stand statue-like among the reeds of the marsh as the canoeist glides by. In some places deer have become so tame that they wander out to the roadway to be fed from the hands of tourists. This tameness is the direct result of the policy of protection on the part of our parks administration.

Should the animal take mild alarm it merely skips away leaping lightly over the logs and brush showing its white tail, or 'flag,' plainly, hence the name 'white-tailed' deer. The name red refers to the color of the deer's coat in summer. Our deer is also called the 'Virginia' deer, the colony of Virginia being where the original colonists first met with the animal.

The deer is usually seen in the red coat of summer. At this time the half-grown antlers are still in the 'velvet', that is, covered with fur. Later in the year the coat of the

deer becomes slate-brown and the antlers are fully grown hard and solid. This is the condition the hunter seeks as a trophy of his hunt.

The young deer are born in May, strange little animals about the size of collie dogs. Their coats are then heavily spotted with white. This coloration serves well to conceal the helpless little animals as they lie on the forest floor almost invisible amid the checkered effect produced by the sunlight through the leafy branches overhead. When found thus you may be sure the mother is not very far away.

Though generally silent the deer when alarmed or curious utters a sort of coughing snort, "Woof, woof."



Black Bear In spite of its size and stories told of its ferocity, the black bear of the Ontario woods is a very timid animal. If surprised in its feeding at some garbage dump, bruin utters a couple of startled grunts and disappears as though by magic into the undergrowth of the forest. The wonder is that such a clumsy beast can vanish so swiftly and so silently.

And yet with all this timidity bears will, with very little encouragement become quite tame about a camp, in fact tame enough to be a destructive nuisance in their search for food. Even doors of cottages have been wrenched off by the animal's powerful claws and teeth.

The bear's diet is very varied. The animal will eat fish and meat either fresh or putrid, all sorts of roots and fruits, even such insects as ants and bees. The garbage

dump of the woodland camp is a constant source of supplies for all the bears in the locality.

Lacking wit, slow of action and clumsy in its movements one wonders how the bear locates sufficient food to support its vast bulk. The answer is that the keen sense of smell with which nature has endowed the bear compensates for other things denied him. With this faculty the bear is able to detect anything even at a great distance, and having found it, uncovers what is there with its powerful claws.

It is well known that the bear hibernates during the winter. This is Nature's way of tiding the mighty animal over a season when food is scarce. But throughout the summer bears often with families of playful cubs wander about foraging, sometimes visiting camps where they become an interesting form of wild life to be seen during a vacation.



Beaver Of all our wild life the beaver is most closely associated with Canadian history. It was for the precious pelt of this humble creature that the early

voyageurs pushed their way farther and farther from the safety of the settlement, braving hardship and danger. Even today the fur of the beaver is among the most valued.

The beaver is the largest of our rodents or gnawing animals. In appearance it resembles a large muskrat with a strangely flat tail. Like the muskrat the beaver is mainly aquatic in its habits and for this life it is well equipped by nature. Its tight close fur resists the water and its broad webbed hind feet serve it well in swimming. The front or incisor teeth of the animal are like very efficient chisels by which the animal is able to gnaw down trees on the river bank, cut them later into lengths for material to construct the dam which working together they place across a small forest stream. In time a small lake or pond is thus formed and this becomes the home of the beaver colony. Far out in the pond safe from most of its enemies, a lodge is built of sticks and mud and this is the nursery, rest-home and store-house for the beaver family.

When necessary to reach trees farther back in the forest the beavers construct canals by which the material can be floated down to the pond and beyond these, trails are cut out in their search for fresh material.

Because of its untiring efforts in building dams, canals, trails, and lodges the beaver is undoubtedly a very industrious animal. Unfortunately however, as much of this activity is carried on during the night, the beaver is not often seen at work.

The beaver is fairly common in Ontario where forests and streams exist, and has meant so much to Canadians in the past and adds so much to the interest of a woodland holiday that today the industrious animal, as well as the maple leaf, is our national emblem.

Squirrels The saucy Red Squirrel is perhaps the best known of all our wild creatures. Though he wears a red coat he should not be confused with the pretty little chipmunk which is distinctly striped and which really should be spoken of as the "striped" squirrel.

We often see the Red Squirrel dashing up and down tree trunks and in a sure-footed way, he ventures far out into the twigs, then fearlessly leaps through the air into the next tree.

His voice is a hard snickering note uttered as though impatient in his curiosity. He also has a long chattering call-note known to most of us who ramble in the woods.



The food of the squirrel consists of nuts, buds, seeds and fruit. He has an unfortunate taste for small bird's eggs and even the helpless young. These, the audacious little animal will carry from the nest in spite of the outcries of the parent-birds.

Yet we cannot help but admire the little rascal who, in spite of the disappearance of his natural home, the wood lots, still continues to live and thrive when other wild creatures have vanished.

The Grey Squirrel is a somewhat larger animal and more deliberate in its movements. Unlike the Red Squirrel this animal is subject to considerable change in colour. The well known "Black" Squirrel is really a grey squirrel. He may even have a tinge of Red in his coat. But in any colour it is the one species.

Unlike the Red Squirrel, which prefers the woodlands, the grey squirrel is quite urban in his tastes. He has

learned that kindly citizens take pleasure in feeding him in city parks, and that he can find convenient places to build a nest about city homes where vines provide shelter. In some cases the squirrel has caused trouble by gnawing his way into the garrets of homes to nest and even causes short circuits in telephone lines by gnawing through lead cables.

Sometimes this squirrel becomes over confident in his city life and like human citizens is run down by traffic on city streets.

As the habits of neither the Red nor the Grey Squirrel interfere very greatly with man's interests, we should accept them as interesting wild creatures in both country and city.



Skunk Most of us fear the skunk. Not because we think it will attack us, but because of the offensive odor the animal emits when disturbed. Apart from this objectionable trait the skunk is quite harmless and a pretty little animal. In fact skunks make interesting pets if properly 'de-skunked'.

In its native haunts the skunk is a slow-moving creature. It minds its own business and hopes you will mind yours. When annoyed it gives due warning that it intends to protect itself by first stamping its feet, then by raising its tail. After that—look out!

Skunks prowl about at night. They seem to know exactly where to dig for the burrowing grubs which so often destroy the roots of garden plants and lawns. The little holes you find in the morning on your lawn are usually the work of a skunk during the night. And should you smell the odor of skunk it is likely it met with a dog who made the mistake of interfering with its hunting.

If the nest of a ground-nesting bird is found care should be taken not to wear a trail toward it, for skunks are known to follow such trails to devour the eggs or young.

As well as being an interesting animal the skunk is valued on account of its glossy durable fur and does much good in destroying many injurious insects.

The skunk is found in all parts of Ontario where it can find shelter in woodlands.



Racoon The racoon or 'coon, as he is called, is an interesting fellow. He resembles a small grey bear with comical mask over his eyes and a tail banded with many black rings. He is quite harmless and with very little encouragement will become very tame about the camp or cottage. If permitted too much freedom he does a good deal of mischief in his search for food. There is little a racoon will not eat. He is particularly fond of corn and becomes very destructive in the corn patch. Yet he does much good in devouring harmful insects and in digging out the eggs of snapping turtles, which if left to mature would prey upon the young of water fowl.

When feeding, the racoon has an amusing habit of washing its food in the nearest water. In fact, in all his habits he is very clean.

The animal is what might be called a light hibernator. A warm sunny day in mid-winter will bring him out to sun himself high in a tree, stretched out on some large horizontal limb. Its track in the snow may be easily recognized by there being five long digits on the fore and hind paws.

Racoons are found throughout Ontario in both wooded and agricultural localities, especially where there is water.



Red Fox In both fable and story the fox has long been considered a wise and cunning animal. The truth is that nature has given him a lithe graceful form and speed and as he is by no means dull in wit he has been well able to take care of himself in a changing outdoor world.

The fox is one of our most beautiful animals. His coat is rich reddish-brown. His slim legs are black and his long full bushy tail is tipped with white. When seen at his best this fine coat gleams with the sign of good health, and his bright eyes have the look of an animal that is fully alert.

In the wild state, the fox preys upon such game as rabbits and partridges. It is not surprising then that we find him making off with such poultry as he finds in agricultural districts, thus incurring the wrath of the

farmer. But as against this we must credit the fox with the destruction of many injurious insects and numbers of rabbits and field mice both of which girdle young fruit trees.

Wary and cunning as this interesting animal is, the fox may become tame enough, perhaps through hunger, to venture about camp or cottage in search of food. On still summer nights his high-pitched bark and strange squalling call add zest to a holiday outdoors.

The red fox, which is distinct from several other varieties, is fairly common in most parts of Ontario.



Porcupine Of all the stupid slow awkward creatures in the Ontario woods, there is none more so than the porcupine. As we see him shamble along the ground or scramble up a tree, we can not help wondering how the porcupine escapes its enemies and survives. The answer is plain. Though nature has denied the animal speed, strength, skill and cunning, she has endowed him with a very efficient

means of defence in his coat of hundreds of tiny sharp quills. The wolf, the bear and the lynx have all learned to leave 'porky' alone or suffer dire consequences. When in close contact with the enemy, the porcupine slaps his spiny tail swiftly upward, leaving many quills sticking in the foe. It is this action that has given rise to the common belief that the animal can 'shoot' its quills at anything attacking it.

The food of the porcupine is entirely vegetable matter. Awkward though he is, he can remain securely high up a tree while he devours leaves, twigs and bark.

This strange inhabitant of our woods is a valuable animal in a very unique way. He is the only animal of any size with palatable flesh which can be easily killed. The camper, trapper or hunter lost in the woods without supplies can sustain life for some time if he can secure the slow-moving porcupine for food.

The animal's name comes from a corruption of the French 'Pine Pig' though the porcupine is more closely related to the beaver than any of the pig family.

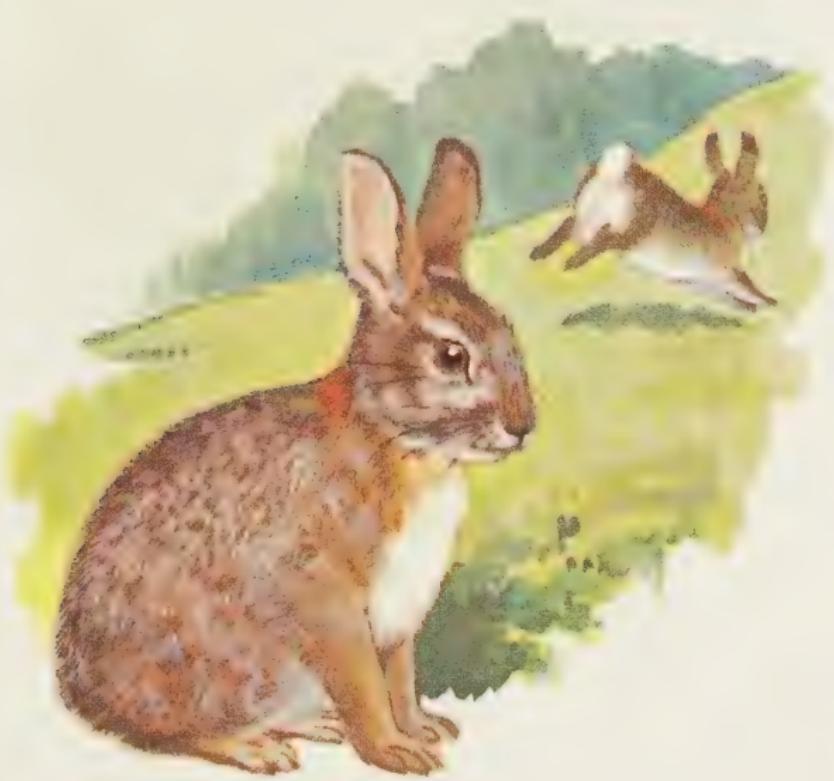


Woodchuck This humble animal of the fields and clearings is known to most boys as the ground hog. What farm boy is not familiar with its brown and grey form as it lurks in the clover field, always close to the old stump beneath which it has burrowed its den. Seldom does the woodchuck venture far from this fortress and at the first sign of danger disappears below with a derisive whistle, which has given him the expressive name of 'whistle pig'.

Unlike most of our wild animals, the woodchuck is abroad in daylight. It is a common sight to see several of these animals foraging about in one large clover field. But though remote from one another, each is always within easy reach of his own burrow. As he feeds he raises himself from time to time high on his haunches, showing his chestnut-brown front, and surveys the surroundings for danger.

An interesting legend about the woodchuck is that on February 2nd each year he rouses himself from his winter sleep and sallies forth to examine the weather. Needless to say this is but a myth. It would be purposeless to arouse himself even if he could do so, in the dead of winter and how does he know the date, for the woodchuck is a very deep sleeper.

Because of the woodchuck's habit of digging holes in fields (which sometimes cause injury to horses and cattle), its destroying of fodder and the little economic value of its fur, the animal is considered useless and a pest by farmers, to be destroyed whenever possible. Yet, despite persecution, the wily woodchuck has survived and even thrived with land settlement where other wild creatures have failed.



Cottontail Rabbit The cottontail rabbit or hare is one of the most harmless of all our wild animals. The shy timid little creature is ready to run at the first sign of danger. Usually it crouches in the thicket, trusting to its dull brown coat to escape being seen. As a last resort it scampers swiftly away showing its cotton-white tail, which has given this rabbit its common name.

In our Ontario woods we have two species of this animal. The cottontail as described above, retains its brown fur throughout the year and the Snowshoe rabbit or varying hare, changes from brown in summer to pure white in winter. In either coat the animal is difficult to see according to season.

Though silent, shy and harmless by nature, the cotton-tail can do considerable damage by girdling shrubbery and fruit trees in its feeding. In turn it is preyed upon by the red fox whose fur is valuable; thus the rabbit can be considered indirectly important among our wild creatures.

Both species of this animal are subject to considerable fluctuation in numbers from year to year due to causes not as yet thoroughly understood.

Muskrat The muskrat is an inhabitant of the marsh and a neighbor of the redwing blackbird. The animal is well-fitted for its life in the water. Its fur is close and waterproof, the hind legs are broadly webbed for swimming and its flattened tail serves as a rudder as the muskrat swims about the reedy home.

Like the beaver the muskrat builds a lodge which serves as nursery and shelter during the winter. As this structure is built of aquatic vegetation, the family feeds upon the walls of its home after fresh food has wilted late in the season. Muskrats also feed on fresh water clams.

The muskrat is so named because of the sweet scent of musk which the animal emits. This is not used as a means of defence but as method of communication by which the 'rats' learn of each others' presence.

Muskrats' chief value to man is in the valuable fur the animals possess. This is a source of income to not only white but Indian trappers throughout the Province of Ontario. Many large areas which might otherwise be drained for agricultural purposes are now wisely left as the natural habitat of this fur-bearing animal.

Living as it does in what might be termed waste places, the muskrat is quite harmless to the interests of man.

Otter The otter is a long slender animal clothed in glossy brown fur. It is possibly the most restless of all our wild creatures and, except when asleep, it is questionable if the otter is ever still. It is equally at home on land or in the water. Along the shore it runs, out onto a floating log, plunges into the water, swims or dives with-





out hesitation, returns to shore and disappears into the woods. Such is the energy of the otter.

Its food is principally fish, captured under water and brought ashore to be devoured. The otter is a valiant fisher. It does not confine its underwater hunting to small fish and will readily tackle even large salmon. The struggle resulting from such an encounter under water can be imagined. It is believed that two or more otters will combine their efforts in their fishing to drive the fish before them.

And yet despite the animal's apparent ferocity, otters are said to make affectionate pets, but they must be kept where they have ample space for their restless activity.

This wild creature is perhaps the most playful of any in our woods. There are times when most animals indulge in play, but none gives itself up to an organized game as does the otter. Several otters, young and old, will join in sliding down a slippery bank of snow or mud. In this

activity the animals bend the fore legs beneath the body and by vigorously kicking the hind legs outwards propel themselves rapidly down the slope, often into the water below. It would be interesting to learn the origin of this almost human activity on the part of a wild creature.

So highly prized is the fur of the otter that heretofore the animal has been extensively hunted. Consequently otters became rare, but wise management on the part of wild life authorities and the setting aside of wilderness areas which favor the otter, as well as other wild animals, have to some extent increased its numbers of late years.



Timber Wolf From earliest childhood many of us have been taught to fear the wolf. The truth is that the wolf fears man. The animal has learned that man is possessed of the death-dealing rifle, so that we seldom have the opportunity of seeing this wild animal in its native haunts. Yet at night its blood-curdling howl can be heard from the dark woods, a sound that rarely fails to send shivers through most of us.

Many of the wild creatures, however, have reason to fear the wolf. A family of wolves can easily run down and kill a

deer or moose. Rabbits, partridges and foxes and even tiny mice fall prey to the wolf. Little wonder then that with this destruction of game a bounty has been put upon wolf-pelts.

Yet this much-maligned wild animal of our forests fills a very valuable place in nature's scheme of things. In its hunting, it is the weaklings, the sick and the injured that fall prey to the wolf. So that the strongest, swiftest and best fitted to survive reproduce their kind. Authorities of wild life management have come to appreciate the value of the wolf and its place in nature and maintain that the animal deserves our protection especially in localities where it cannot molest domestic animals.

In fact, far from being a savage beast, the male wolf is kinder to its young than any other wild animal and will put up with almost unlimited abuse from them.

The timber wolf ranges all through our North wherever forest affords it shelter.



Red-winged Blackbird Look for the redwing among the cattails of the marsh. The male you will recognize at once by his bright scarlet epaulets, but the sombrely-clad female in her brown striped plumage appears as quite a different species.

Redwings are noisy birds, the loud call of the male 'Konk-quer-ree' rings across the marsh, while the whistling and the clicking of the female as she hovers above the reeds tells us that the nest is near.

The nest is woven of grasses of the marsh securely fastened to the rushes a few inches above the water. The eggs, four or five in number, are pale blue curiously scrawled with black and brown markings.

Early in spring even before the ice of the marsh is melted the male redwings arrive from the south and sing in chorus. Though not a musical song it is a welcome promise of better days to come. A few days later the females arrive and soon the birds commence their nesting.

In the fall the male redwings lose their black coats and scarlet epaulets, and assume the mottled plumage of their mates. The birds gather with others of the same family in dense flocks to throng the marshes before departing for the south.



Black-capped Chickadee and the White-breasted Nuthatch These two birds belong to the same family. Although often seen together, their actions and voices are quite different. The

chickadee is a friendly sociable little bird, which with its black cap and throat appears to be wearing furs. With several companions the chickadee travels through the winter woods caring little for the blizzard, twittering its cheery call of "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee".

With the approach of spring this little bird sings a clear two-noted whistle which has been put to the words of "Spring soon", or "Sweet sugar".

The white-breasted nuthatch is very different. It wears the black cap but has a pure white throat and breast. Its call is a nasal "Yank, yank". In spring the bird sings a long hollow laughing note, "Hah, hah, hah, hah".

The nuthatch is the acrobat of the bird world. It scrambles about the rough of the trees clinging upright, upside down or sideways with equal ease as it searches for food of insects. The nuthatch has a curious habit of wedging small nuts into crevices of the bark and pecking them open for the contents. Hence the name "Nuthatch". There are two species of nuthatch found in the Ontario woods, the white-breasted and the red-breasted, referring to their colors. The habits of these birds are similar.

Both chickadees and nuthatches do a great deal of good in devouring the eggs and dormant insects during winter, and soon learn to come to the feeding station where food of suet and seeds are put out for the winter birds.



White-throated Sparrow

A clear sweet whistle ending in a musical trill comes to us from the forest. The white-throat is singing.

Few of our birds sing so clearly-uttered a whistle, nor one so easily imitated. Many words have been used to describe the song of this handsome sparrow. He is supposed to sing "Old Tom Peabody, peabody", or "O

Sweet Canada, Canada", and so has been named the 'peabody bird' and the 'Canada sparrow'.

All through the bright days of May and June and even into mid-summer we hear this plaintive song so typical of the northern forest.

Though this sparrow wears the brown and grey plumage so common in his family, he may be recognized at once by the pure white patch on his throat. Well is he named the whitethroat.

Still wearing this distinctive mark the bird will be found among the many other species of his kind in the weed-patches doing a vast amount of good in devouring the seeds of many noxious weeds. As evening approaches, the whitethroats gather to roost in the thickets, each bird calling a sharp metallic "Chink, Chink", very like the sound of a stone-cutter's chisel on the marble.

Song Sparrow

It is little wonder that the song sparrow is so named. Early in March his gay chant of sweet notes is heard, often amid a late snow-storm and before we really expect any of our song birds back from the south. All through the nesting season and on into the summer the song sparrow sings. Even among the flocks of many kinds of sparrows which throng the hedgerows in fall, we sometimes hear a feeble repetition of his spring song as though he must sing.

The bird's song is very difficult to describe satisfactorily. It generally begins with a series of three or four well-defined notes followed by a number of musical trills and warbles, but no two song sparrows sing exactly alike. Whatever the song, it always has a ring of good cheer and a most welcome bird note after a long winter.

In plumage the bird is very plainly marked, having little in the way of any distinctive badge. His best mark is a heavily striped breast with the appearance of a larger spot in the center.

The song sparrow is not only our commonest native sparrow but one of the commonest song birds in Ontario. A pair will often nest in the garden shrubbery making interesting bird-neighbors.

Occasionally we find a lone song sparrow remaining with us all winter, though he can scarcely be considered one of our regular winter birds.



Flicker The flicker is our most interesting woodpecker. He wears a coat of many colors. Black, white, yellow, brown, grey, buff and a touch of scarlet all appear on his plumage with many spots, bars and patches.

As though to call attention to himself he is very noisy. Sometimes he whistles a loud 'Whee-o' and again he utters a loud long cackling call, or in true wood-pecker style he beats out a resounding tattoo on the dead limb of a tree.

In spring the male goes throughout some very strange antics of bowing and swaying before the female all the while calling out "Which-you, which-yo, which-you", which may have suggested the name of flicker. So well known has the bird become that he has many different names throughout the country.

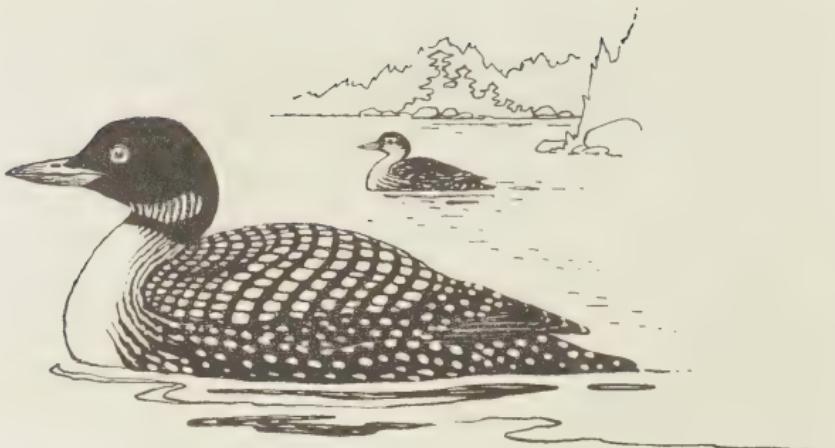
Flickers nest in a cavity in a tree trunk or post and lay several pure white eggs. Unlike other woodpeckers which spend their time amid the trees this bird is often seen on the ground hopping about digging out ants as food with his strong bill.

Not only is this wood-pecker a beautiful bird, but is useful in destroying such insects as infest the wood of forest trees often ruining them as lumber.

Loon or Northern Diver

aquatic bird. The young are hatched in a nest at the water's edge and take to the water at once, swimming about the lake with their parents, often riding upon the back of the

The loon or northern diver is distinctly an



female bird. They soon learn to dive and swim below the surface in pursuit of fish, molluscs and other food. It might be said that the birds never come ashore, and fly only to reach some nearby water elsewhere.

There is an air about this strange water fowl that speaks of its primitive origin. Quite at home in the water the bird is almost helpless on land. Its voice too is a low form of bird music. The usual call is a short quavering laugh. This is prolonged into a similar note oft-repeated as the bird flies across the sky. Often at night the bird utters a long weird wolfish howl which dies away in an eerie mournful tone. Occasionally when several loons are together one will screech out a loud harsh two-note wail which may be considered the most terrifying of all wild voices.

True to its wild nature, this picturesque water fowl never becomes really tame, as many wild creatures do in response to protection. Nor can it be considered game, for its flesh is very unpalatable. As a symbol of the great northern land of lake and forest, the loon will always be cherished in the memories of those who have lived or spent a vacation there.

Belted Kingfisher In Ontario we have but one species of kingfisher. The bird is easily recognized by its blue and white plumage and the fact that it is usually found in the vicinity of water.

The kingfisher can hardly be called a graceful bird. The bird's crested head appears too large for its body and the tail too short. The bill is very large and the feet so small that they can scarcely be seen. The female differs from the male in one marking only. That is in having a band of brown across the breast as well as one of blue as in the male.

As the name implies the bird preys upon fish. It may be seen perched on a limb by some stream intently watching



the water below. When its prey is seen the bird plunges headlong into the water, reappearing with a small fish which is devoured whole. If disturbed the kingfisher flies off with a harsh rattling call. This it would seem is its only note.

The kingfisher nests near the water. A long tunnel is dug out of the bank of the stream and a scanty nest which consists of twigs and fish bones is built at end. Five or six pure white eggs are laid which hatch out into the ugly nestlings, which soon grow the blue and white plumage of the adult.

The kingfisher's fish-eating habits can hardly be said to be detrimental to the interests of the angler, for the fish taken by the bird are mainly very small coarse fish. Many an ardent angler has found entertainment in watching the actions of this bird engaged in the same pursuit. It is only when the bird pilfers the small fry of the fish-hatchery that it can be considered harmful to man's interests.

With the coming of winter, when the streams freeze, the kingfisher must move south. During a mild season when no ice is formed the bird may be seen fishing as usual.

American Goldfinch The goldfinch is the 'wild canary' of our school-boy days, the familiar bird of the summer holidays. In his

bright yellow plumage, appearing so much the brighter in contrast with his black wings and tail and jaunty black cap, the goldfinch certainly is like the tame canary. The female is clad in a quiet yellowish-brown garb with darker wings.

The goldfinch has an interesting habit of pulling thistle-heads to pieces, feeding upon the seeds and using the down to line the nest. As the birds must wait for this harvest, they nest later in the season than most of our birds. We certainly do not begrudge these merry little gleaners all the thistle seeds they care to eat.

Throughout the spring and summer, the goldfinch sings a cheery little song of trills, whistles and warbles very like the song of the tame canary. In his glee he may sing a complete song lasting some time, then, ending abruptly, he bounds off in a long undulating flight calling "Per-chic-o-ree, per-chic-a-ree," at every bound.

Goldfinches remain in southern Ontario throughout the winter. A flock of these birds will sometimes be found feeding off the seeds of the birch and alder which hang in catkins. No bright yellow males will be seen at this season for with the autumn moult the goldfinch, as is the case



with many of our colorful birds, assumes the duller colors of the female until the following spring.



Bluebird The bluebird is a general favorite with all bird-lovers. The adults are bright blue above and rich brown below—a very pleasing combination. The young birds are somewhat spotted in plumage. The subdued gentle warbling song of the male is quite in keeping with the soft air of early spring.

The bluebird nests in snug cavities of posts and trees and will readily occupy a bird-box. Should you be fortunate enough to have a pair of these beautiful birds as neighbors, care should be taken to protect them from the house sparrow and the starling. Both these aggressive birds will drive away the more peace-loving bluebirds from their chosen nesting places.

The hardy bluebird arrives from the south very early in spring. Even before the snow has completely disappeared we hear his pleasing song from the orchard or from across the sodden meadow. Then in early autumn we see loose flocks of the birds flying overhead on their way southward and hear their plaintive two-noted call as they pass. "Far-away, far-away," they seem to call.

This beautiful bird was formerly very common in Ontario. With the passing of the rugged stump fences and the removal of old orchard trees, both of which provided the bluebirds with nesting sites and with the ill-advised introduction of the quarrelsome house sparrow and the aggressive starling, which also nest in cavities, the numbers of our native bluebird have been greatly reduced in later years. However it is gratifying to learn that many nature study clubs, realizing the value of the bluebird because of its beauty and economic importance, have taken steps to protect this species and by providing nesting boxes have increased the numbers of this attractive bird.

Evening Grosbeak Despite the evening grosbeak's somewhat poetic name the bird is to be seen at any hour of the day. It is believed that the bird was first observed when singing in the evening. The song is described as "A wandering jerky warble, beginning low, suddenly increasing in power and as suddenly ceasing".

In colors the evening grosbeak is a very spectacular bird, especially the male. His plumage of brown, black,



yellow, grey and white in such pronounced patches should identify the bird at once. His huge bill has given him the descriptive name of grosbeak.

As these grosbeaks feed on the seeds of such frozen fruits as still remain on the trees during the winter, this powerful bill is needed to crush such tough fare.

In southern Ontario the evening grosbeak comes to us during the winter and will be found feeding in such trees as the hawthorne, mountain ash and wild apple. They sometimes invade the city in large numbers, showing little or no fear of man as they sit feeding in fruit-bearing trees on the city streets or at feeding stations.

The natural home of this interesting bird is in the coniferous forests of the north and west, but with the introduction of the Manitoba maple with its bunches of abundant fruit in the eastern parts of the country, the grosbeak has extended its range and has become much more common with us in Ontario than formerly.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak Few of our birds are better named than the rose-breasted grosbeak. The male wears a large rose-colored patch on his white breast and he certainly has a 'gross' beak.

In feeding, the birds have a strange preference for potato 'bugs' so that the large strong bill is well adapted for



crushing these hard insects. As these are great pests about the market garden, this grosbeak is a very valuable bird.

The rose-breasted grosbeak sings a charming song consisting of many rich mellow notes woven into a long smooth-flowing warble. This is much like the song of the robin but considered by many bird-lovers to be more musical and the better for not being interrupted by the pauses between the bars as is the robin's carol. The call is a simple but distinctive "Tzinc, Tzinc".

The female grosbeak is very different from her mate, so different as to be mistaken for quite another species. She is distinctly striped in pale and darker brown. Fortunately she has also the very large bill which will at once identify her, especially if seen with the more colorful male bird.

The beautiful rose-breasted grosbeak comes to us in southern Ontario early in May and will be found in forest trees feeding upon the many insects which infest the opening buds.



Scarlet Tanager In his coat of vivid scarlet and jet black wings and tail, the scarlet tanager is one of our most highly-colored birds. Very different indeed is he from his sombrely-clad mate in her

dull olive-brown. In Ontario we have two species of tanager, the scarlet and the summer tanager. The latter bird is rich red and lacks the black wings and tail. With this difference there is no mistaking the two species of the male birds in spring.

The scarlet tanager is more common than is supposed. The bird seems to be self-conscious about his gaudy plumage, for he spends much of his time feeding or resting quietly amid foliage, giving us a good opportunity to see him at our leisure. In flight he appears as a streak of bright red against the background of green foliage.

The song of the tanager resembles that of the robin. It is a deep rich warble but sung in somewhat halting phrases and not with the ease of the more familiar bird. His call-note is a loud distinctive "Pit-cheer, pit-cheer".

With the coming of autumn, the scarlet tanager loses his striking colors and becomes much like the female bird in her quiet brown. As this moult takes place gradually there is a short period during which the bird appears a curious spectacle in his mixture of scarlet and brown feathers.

Blue Jay and the Canada Jay These two jays
are very differ-
ent in several ways.

The blue jay in his gaudy plumage of blue and white is a noisy rollicking fellow who soon makes himself known. At all seasons of the year his loud screaming call of "Jay, jay" comes from the woods or orchard. It is one of our winter birds which remains to nest with us in spring. In fall blue jays gather in loose flocks and travel through the woods calling to one another with as much glee as a crowd of school-boys on a holiday ramble. Woe unto the owl these revellers discover dozing among the evergreens. They surround the owl and scream at their victim who can only blink helplessly at the noisy mob. However, the jays soon tire of their sport and leave for other parts.

The food of the blue jay consists of seeds, fruit and, we regret to say, occasionally he robs the nests of other birds of both eggs and young as does his larger relative the crow.

The Canada jay is quite a different bird. His plumage is a dull grey with patches of white. In southern Ontario the bird is seen only on rare occasions. His home is among the evergreen forests of the north. Here he is a frequent visitor to the lumber camp and the camp of the hunter. On such visits he becomes very bold, probably because of hunger and will snatch scraps of food from within a few feet or even inches of the camp fire. Though many reasons have been



suggested for this bird's erratic appearances south of his natural home, none seems to be entirely satisfactory.

The Canada jay utters a variety of calls. As one writer says "I have learned long ago to ascribe to this species any unknown squeaks and wails heard in the spruce woods".

The Canada jay is better known as the "Whisky Jack"—a name derived from the bird's Indian name of "Wis-ka-tjan". Due to its feeding habits it is also called the 'meat-bird' and, because of its association with hunting, as the 'moose-bird'.

Baltimore Oriole The Baltimore oriole is well-known on account of the unusual design of its nest. This wonderful structure is in the form of a deep pouch woven of plant fibers and so firmly attached to the slim twigs of such trees as the elm and willow that no gale can tear it away. In fact the nest often remains hanging to the tree throughout the following winter.

The male oriole is a beautiful bird with his orange breast and black head and back. The female, though somewhat quieter hue, is still a colorful bird. The song of the

male is as startling as his plumage, being a series of rich, mellow, flute-like notes and sharp whistles. He is an inquisitive fellow. A whistled imitation of his song soon brings him seeking the other oriole whom he believes is trespassing on his territory, but after much scolding and chattering he leaves to sing elsewhere.

The young orioles are described as the cry-babies of the bird world. All day they keep up a plaintive call of "Dee-dee-dee" stopping only when the parents arrive to feed them.

The name Baltimore as applied to this bird has nothing to do with the city of that name, but from the fact that Lord Baltimore chose as the colors of his livery the rich orange and jet black which he so much admired in this bird's plumage.

In spite of its name this handsome bird is as much a native of Ontario as elsewhere.





Purple Finch This bird's name is rather misleading. The male is really a rich rosy magenta rather than purple. As is common with most birds where the male is colorful the female purple finch is drab brown and striped. The young males of the first year resemble the females in plumage.

Few of our birds sing such a lusty tuneful song as this finch. The song consists of a long musical warble of many rich notes very hastily delivered. The bird seems to really enjoy singing, for in its ecstasy, the purple finch springs into the air to continue his song. He is also known to perform a curious aerial dance before the female during the mating season.

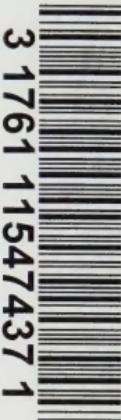
Purple finches remain with us in southern Ontario throughout the year, feeding on the seeds of such fruits as remain on the trees after ripening. Large flocks of these birds will be found feeding in silence in the winter woods. Occasionally even at this season one of the number will favor us with a few bars of his rich song heard later in spring.

Like many of the winter birds the purple finch is attracted to the feeding station. A true finch, the bird prefers seeds as fare. The stout conical bill enables the bird to crush the frozen or withered berries for the seeds within.

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FIRE KILLS EVERYTHING

The grand prize for the best poster submitted in the Department of Lands and Forests poster contest at the 1959 Canadian National Exhibition, was won by a twelve year old girl, whose poster showed a female red fox jumping over a log, carrying one of her pups in her mouth, with a forest fire following closely at her heels. The caption below the poster said "*Fire Kills Everything*".

Those of you who have visited the home of the wild birds and animals described in this little book should always keep in mind that *Fire Kills Everything*, and be careful with fire in all its forms... campfires and smoking materials, remember, are the main causes of forest fires.